

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF A TYPE-SPECIES
FOR *PHIDIPPUS* KOCH, 1846. Z.N.(S.) 1904

By Joseph A. Beatty (Department of Zoology, Southern Illinois University,
Carbondale, Illinois 62901, U.S.A.)

A. The first sentence contains a statement so worded as to be almost certainly an error. The spider now usually referred to as *Phidippus audax* (Hentz) is one of the most familiar American spiders, and one of the most frequently cited in general biological literature, but the probability that it is the most common North American jumping spider is effectively zero.

B. The use of names by ecologists and, especially, by textbook writers should not be permitted to influence decisions on nomenclature. The perpetuation of errors by such authors, long after they have been corrected by specialists, indicates that ecologists and textbook writers are generally willing to use the first name they locate for a given organism, and unwilling to take time to make sure it is the correct name. (This should not be interpreted as strong censure of non-specialist authors. Their time is, after all, limited.)

C. No type specimen is available for either *Salticus variegatus* Lucas or *Attus audax* Hentz. It appears to me that nothing is gained by changing the type-species of the genus from one old and poorly described species to another even more poorly described, unless type material exists. If the type-species of the genus is to be changed at all, I recommend selection of a name for which types (or a type) are available.

D. The taxonomy of the jumping spiders (Salticidae) is in a highly confused state at present. It is certain that new revisions using current standards will result, unavoidably, in wholesale changes in nomenclature. (See R. D. Barnes, 1958, *American Museum Novitates* No. 1867). The genera of the family are oversplit, and based largely on unrealistic characters. Workers in different parts of the world have ignored or been unfamiliar with each others' work.

Under such circumstances it seems unwise to make changes in the nomenclature piecemeal, by action of the I.C.Z.N. Further research may demonstrate that the change proposed in this application is unnecessary or undesirable. Rather, the nomenclatural changes should await a critical re-examination of most or all the genera of the family, and a lumping and re-definition of these genera on more reasonable bases. A series of recent papers by Miss M. E. Galiano provides a good beginning toward this task. (See: *Rev. Soc. Ent. Arg.*, 1965; *Rev. Mus. Arg. Cien. Nat. Ent.*, 1965; etc.) Unless this overall study is made first, any nomenclatural decision reached during the next several years will have a high probability of being rejected later.

My opinion, in summary, is that this application contains an unwise provision (proposal of *Attus audax* Hentz as type of the genus *Phidippus*), and is, in any case, premature. My recommendation is that it be laid on the table, without prejudice, for possible reconsideration later, when more of the necessary reassessment of the genera of salticids has been completed.

By Robin Leech (Entomology Department, University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

As the type of *Attus auxax* Hentz, 1845, is destroyed (Levi, *in litt.*, November 16, 1970), I do not see that any stability is established by suppressing the apparently senior synonym name *Salticus variegatus* Lucas, 1833, especially when and as it is the type-species for the generic name *Phidippus*.